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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 005313

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SUBJECT: RUSSIAN VIEWS ON INF TREATY

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The GOR is interested in working with the U.S. to see how other countries could be encouraged to agree to the norms of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF), but wants to proceed cautiously. Acknowledging that there are no provisions in the current treaty to allow it to be expanded, working level MFA officials proposed that we gather reactions from other countries to the October 25 U.S.-Russia Joint Statement and analyze them to determine how best to proceed. They suggested that the U.S. and Russia work together in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), and/or at the Non-Proliferation Treaty prepcom, but were flexible on the venue. Defense experts told us that Russia wants to either abolish or "universalize" the INF treaty because it sees future threats more likely to come from Pakistan, China, and possibly, Iran, all of which could reach Russia with intermediate range missiles, but they remain skeptical that those countries would sign on to a ban of their missiles. Some analysts posited that Iran's participation in a universalized INF Treaty would also eliminate the need for a U.S. missile defense system in Europe. End Summary.

Let's Proceed Slowly

12. (C) Vasiliy Boryak, Chief of the START and ABM section of the MFA Department of DVBR and Mikhail Streltsov, INF representative, expressed appreciation October 30 for the USG's quick turnaround on the Joint Statement. They explained that the GOR did not envision trying to enlarge the INF Treaty itself, but rather to look at ways that other countries could be brought into line with the "regime of the Treaty:" its limitations, obligations, and the like. The GOR intended to initiate joint action in the CD and to provide the Joint Statement as an official document of the Conference.

13. (C) Streltsov stressed that, afterwards, Russia and the U.S. should proceed cautiously. It was not the right time to present a draft resolution to the UN General Assembly. Rather, we should get reactions from other countries, particularly key countries like China, India, Pakistan and Iran, to the U.S.-Russia Joint Declaration's call for other countries to renounce and destroy ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. Then, Streltsov proposed, Russia and the U.S. could jointly analyze the reactions and develop ideas to make the Joint Declaration's proposals more specific. While noting that the GOR had received no reactions to the Declaration from other countries yet, Streltsov said that

earlier indications from Pakistan were that they were not ready yet to engage on the issue of eliminating intermediate-range missiles, and, a year ago, China had been negative.

Format Should Be Discussed Later

14. (C) When asked whether the GOR would press for negotiations for a new Treaty, Boryak replied that the GOR was not proposing negotiations at this time, and Streltsov added that it was premature to formulate a position on the form or the desired outcome of our discussions. He said the GOR thought the issue could be worked in the CD and/or NPT prepcom, but was flexible on venue.

Experts Skeptical on Expanded Ban

15. (C) Most defense experts were skeptical that efforts to "universalize" the INF Treaty would be successful, but argued that the ban on intermediate range missiles should either be scrapped or extended to other countries. Noting that future threats to Russia were more likely to come from China or Pakistan, or even Iran (though most discounted the threat from Iran anytime soon), either these countries should not be allowed to have missiles that could reach Russia, or Russia should be permitted to have its own missiles capable of responding to the threat. Few, however, were in favor of abolishing the INF Treaty. General Pavel Zolotarev, Deputy Director of the Russian Academy of Sciences U.S. and Canada Institute, stressed it was important for the U.S. and Russia to keep the Treaty so as to set the example, and serve as a

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base from which to press other countries to renounce intermediate-range missiles. While some experts noted that elements in the MOD might want to abolish the Treaty in order to make the case for funding for new weapons (and possible skimming of money off the top), others said the MOD saw no urgent need to withdraw from the Treaty. Aleksandr Konovalov, President of the Institute for Strategic Assessments, contended that Russia would not abolish the INF Treaty, because it would take Russia too long to reconstitute the physical infrastructure and capabilities necessary to build intermediate-range missiles.

INF Linked to MD

16. (C) Konovalov suggested that if the INF were expanded to other countries, particularly Iran, it would eliminate the need for missile defense in eastern Europe, and would give the U.S. and Russia more time to discuss how the threat from Iran should be addressed. He contended that Iran would not develop an ICBM for many years.

Comment

17. (C) As we develop the U.S.-Russia Security Framework proposed during the October 12 2 2 meetings, building on the Joint Declaration on the INF Treaty is one area where we and the Russians could develop joint cooperation on a significant element of arms control, and could be an area where we could leverage Russia's concerns about future threats to achieve elements of our goals with respect to Iran.

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